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ALL NEW ROMANCES OF RANCH AND RANGE!
FICTION HOUSE MAGAZINE

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A FICTION HOUSE MAGAZINE

COWGIRL ROMANCES, No. 11, Fall, 1952. Published quarterly by Love Romances Pub. Co., Inc., 1658 Summer Street, Stamford, Connecticut. T. T. Scott, Pres.; J. F. Byrne, Mgr. Editor; Jerry Iger, Art Director. Application for second-class entry pending at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. Contents copyrighted 1952 by Love Romances Pub. Co., Inc. For advertising rates: Advertising Director, Fiction House, Inc., 1658 Summer Street, Stamford, Connecticut. Printed in U. S. A.

Indians
PICTURE STORIES of the FIRST AMERICANS
WAR BIRDS
FIGHTING SCOUTS of the BATTLE FRONT
RANGERS
THE BIG
SIX
OF THE COMICS!
Jungle
COMICS
All New Picture Stories of
Long Bow
INDIAN BOY
COWGIRL
Romances

Love is Where You Find It

THE BROKEN STIRRUP RANGE WAS CURSED AND GINNY MADISON HATED IT. FOR THIS RAW, ARID LAND OF SAND AND WASTE HAD KILLED HER MOTHER AND DAD. BUT SHE HAD NO OTHER HOME AND IT WAS HERS NOW...HERS WITH ITS DEVIL OF DUST, ITS GHOSTS OF EVIL AND ITS MEMORIES OF LONG, SAD YEARS GONE BY. YET, SHE HAD TO FIGHT THE CURSE - HAD TO QUELL THE RISING HATRED...OR SHE WOULD LOSE THE THING SHE WANTED MOST...

"IT WAS YEARS SINCE I'D BEEN HERE, BUT IT LOOKED THE SAME. ALREADY IT'S DREARY LONELINESS, WAS STEALING OVER ME..."
SADDLE JUNCTION, MA'AM! QUITE A WAYS FROM CALIFORNIA, EH?
AND NOT HALF AS CHEERFUL, THANK YOU!

"WHEN THE TRAIN PULLED OUT, A PLEASANT VOICE WAS CALLING MY NAME..."
YOU MUST BE GINNY MADISON! JIM DENVER'S THE NAME! WE GOT YOUR TELEGRAM, SO I CAME TO FETCH YOU!
I'LL ONLY BE HERE UNTIL I CAN INTEREST A BUYER, MISTER DENVER!

"DAD HAD WRITTEN TO ME THAT HE'D SUB-LET THE RANCH TO YOUNG DENVER AND HIS AUNT..."

I'LL BE RIGHT SORRY WHEN YOU SELL 'ER, MISS MADISON! I'M SENTIMENTAL, I GUESS - LIKE YOUR DAD WAS!

"SENTIMENTAL OVER WHAT — ROCKS AND DUST AND HEAT? A FEELING OF HATRED WELLED UP IN ME, AS WE DROVE UNDER THE FAMILIAR ENTRANCE...!

"BUT SOMEHOW IT WASN'T AS BAD AS I THOUGHT IT WAS GOING TO BE - AND I HAD A SLIGHT INKLING AS TO WHY..."

HMM... JIM DENVER, I KIND OF LIKE THE NAME... DAD MUST HAVE THOUGHT A LOT OF HIM TO TRUST HIM SO!

"BUT WHEN WE ARRIVED, I WAS AMAZED AT THE NEAT, RAMBLING RANCHHOUSE..."

AFTER YOUR DAD DIED, AUNT BETSY AND I RE-BUILT IT AND TIDIED UP A BIT!

I CAN SEE YOU DID! THAT MUST BE SHE NOW!

"SOON, WE WERE GREETING EACH OTHER AS IF WE'D KNOWN EACH OTHER ALL OUR LIVES..."

I'M SO GLAD TO SEE YOU! MAY I CALL YOU AUNT BETSY?

GO RIGHT AHEAD, CHILD! THIS IS YOUR HOME!

"IN THE TWO WEEKS THAT PASSED I WAS LIKE ONE OF THE DENVER FAMILY, BUT ONE DAY..."

THE CORRAL IS JUST BEHIND THE SHED, AND...

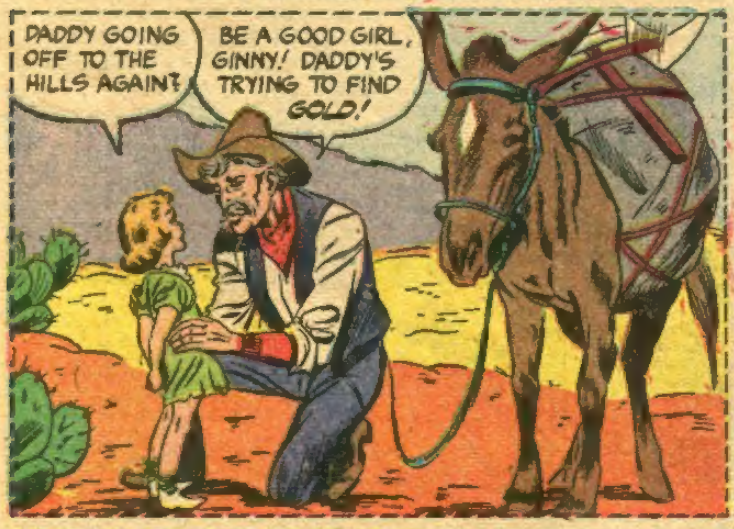
WHAT DO YOU KEEP IN THAT BARN, JIM?

"HE LED ME OVER TO THE DOOR, AND I COULD TELL IT KEPT SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO HIM..."

THAT MACHINERY THERE - DO YOU RECOGNIZE IT, GINNY?

WHY, IT WAS DAD'S! HE WAS ALWAYS TRAVELLING OFF WITH IT SOMEWHERE!
RIGHT! IT'S A RIG FOR DIGGING!
YOU KNOW, JIM, IN A LOT OF WAYS YOU'RE JUST LIKE HIM! ARE YOU LOOKING FOR GOLD, TOO?
GOLD? YES, YOU COULD CALL IT THAT, I GUESS!
"IT WAS THE INTENSITY IN HIS VOICE, HIS EYES...AND THE NEXT MOMENT I WAS IN HIS ARMS..."

"AND IN THAT BRIEF INSTANT, MY MIND SWIRLED BACK THROUGH THE YEARS TO WHEN I'D BEEN A CHILD..."



"GOLD! GOLD! THAT WAS ALL I EVER HEARD FROM HIM, AND FROM MY MOTHER ONLY TEARS AND PRAYERS...
PLEASE HELP HIM FIND WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR, PLEASE!

"ONE DAY, SERIOUS-FACED MEN CAME ON HORSEBACK..."
WE'VE GOT TO HAVE PAYMENTS ON THOSE NOTES, FRED!
GIVE ME ANOTHER MONTH—THREE WEEKS! I'M SURE TO...

MY DAD WAS A FOOL WITH GOLD ON HIS BRAIN! HE KILLED MY MOTHER, DESTROYED SOMETHING IN ME! NO, JIM— YOU ARE THE SAME!
GINNY, NO! LISTEN TO ME, HE WAS...I—I...

"IN THE WEEKS THAT PASSED, I DIDN'T SEE MUCH OF JIM - HE WAS GONE INTO THE HILLS AND HE'D TAKEN THE DIGGING EQUIPMENT WITH HIM. SO FAR, I HAD DONE NOTHING ABOUT SELLING, BUT ONE DAY IN TOWN...

"I HAD JUST FINISHED SOME ERRANDS FOR AUNT BETSY..."

THAT MAN COMING THIS WAY... I BELIEVE HE'S WAVING TO ME!

"HE INTRODUCED HIMSELF AS BILL DURAND AND HE HAD A RATHER DEEP INTERESTING VOICE..."

I KNEW YOUR DAD WELL, MISS MADISON - AND BEFORE HE DIED, WE OFTEN DISCUSSED THE PROBLEM OF THE BROKEN STIRRUP - WHICH AS YOU KNOW IS WATER!

BLACKSMITH

"THE MORE HE TALKED, THE MORE INTERESTED I BECAME..."

IF YOU'LL LISTEN TO MY PROPOSITION, YOU'LL HAVE WATER AND YOUR RANCH WILL BE THE RICHEST IN ARIZONA!

IF WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE, MISTER DURAND, I'D LIKE YOU TO CALL ON ME TOMORROW EVENING!

"I GUESS I FELT A LITTLE TRIUMPHANT WHEN I FOUND JIM ON THE RANGE THE NEXT MORNING..."

WELL! I SEE YOU'VE STOPPED YOUR GOLD HUNTING LONG ENOUGH TO BRAND SOME CATTLE, JIM!

THEY'VE GOT TO BE SHIPPED TO MARKET BEFORE THEY DIE OF THIRST!

"THAT EVENING I RODE INTO THE HILLS WITH BILL DURAND..."

BUT ARE YOU SURE IT WILL WORK, BILL? MY DAD FAILED AND JIM DENVER'S FAILING NOW!

EXCUSE ME, BUT DENVER'S A HARE-BRAINED FOOL, MISS MADISON!

THERE'S YOUR LAND - DUST, SAND, ROCK... WITH MY SYSTEM OF IRRIGATION, IT WILL ALL BE CHANGED TO FERTILE GRAZING LANDS!

IT SOUNDS WONDERFUL! IT WILL COST MONEY, I'LL HAVE TO THINK ABOUT IT!

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I SUPPOSE I HAD A FEW GRAND IDEAS IN THE MONTHS THAT WENT BY... I FORGOT ABOUT SELLING, AND DREAMED ONLY OF SUCCEEDING WHERE DAD AND JIM DENVER HAD FAILED - AND ONE DAY MY MIND WAS MADE UP..."

"AT THE CORRAL I ASKED WHERE JIM DENVER WAS..."

IT'S IMPORTANT, SMOKEY - I SIMPLY MUST SEE HIM!

WAL, AIN'T SUPPOSE TO TELL, MA'AM - BUT TRY OVER AT CACTUS CUT!

"AS I RODE, MY HORSE'S HOOFS KICKED UP CLOUDS OF SWIRLING DUST..."

USELESS LAND - EITHER I'M GOING TO IRRIGATE IT OR SELL IT!

"AND AT ANOTHER SPOT, SCRAWNY CATTLE DYING AT A DRIED UP WATERHOLE..."

WHY, IT'S INHUMAN AND SAVAGE!

"AS I DREW CLOSER TO CACTUS CUT, I KNEW WHAT HAD TO BE DONE..."

JIM'S GOT TO LISTEN, AND HE'S GOT TO AGREE!

"SOON, I ARRIVED AT THE PLACE WHERE THEY WERE STARTING TO SINK A MINE SHAFT..."

JIM! I'VE GOT TO TALK TO YOU!

GIVE UP GOLD HUNTING, JIM! LET'S POOL WHAT MONEY WE HAVE, AND PUT IN A SYSTEM OF IRRIGATION!

IRRIGATION? ARE YOU CRAZY? IT'LL COST THOUSANDS FOR SUCH A SYSTEM AND IT'LL NEVER WORK! MAYBE WHEN I GET A STRIKE, GINNY - I...

A STRIKE! DAD ALL OVER AGAIN! YOU'RE IMPOSSIBLE, JIM DENVER!

"GOLD WAS ALL HE'D EVER THINK OF, AND THE NEXT MORNING I WAS IN BILL DURAND'S OFFICE IN TOWN..."
I WANT TO SEE PLANS AND COSTS, BILL!
BRING 'EM OUT, BENSON!
WE'LL SINK AN ARTIFICIAL LAKE HERE ON THE MOUNTAIN... THE WATER WILL CARRY DOWN THROUGH PIPES! WITH A CHATTEL MORTGAGE ON YOUR RANCH, WE'LL ARRANGE FINANCING...
"BUT THROUGH MY HEAD DRUMMED JIM'S WORDS—IT WON'T WORK!"
I'LL THINK IT OVER, BILL, AND LET YOU KNOW TOMORROW!
"AS I LEFT THE OFFICE, JIM DENVER WAS OUTSIDE AT THE HITCHING RACK..."
GINNY! THEY SAID I'D FIND YOU IN TOWN, BUT WHAT'RE YOU DOING IN DURAND'S OFFICE?
DISCUSSING THE IRRIGATION PROJECT WITH HIM, AND...
"HE LEAPED AT ME AND ANGER FLASHED FROM HIS EYES..."
YOU'RE TALKING IRRIGATION WITH HIM? YOU SILLY LITTLE FOOL, HE'S A CROOKED PROMOTER! HE'S TRIED THAT ROUTINE ON EVERYONE IN THE VALLEY! YOU HAVEN'T SIGNED ANYTHING?
NOT YET, JIM DENVER—BUT I'M GOING TO—RIGHT NOW! YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A DUMB DREAMER!
NO, GINNY—WAIT! I-I...
"I TURNED BACK TO ENTER BILL'S OFFICE ONCE AGAIN..."
VOICES! HE'S TALKING WITH THAT ASSISTANT OF HIS! WAIT, WHAT'S THIS....

DO YOU THINK SHE'LL FALL FOR IT, BILL?
POSITIVE, BENSON! AND ONCE WE GET THE RANCH MORTGAGED, SHE HAS TO PAY OR WE GET THE RANCH!
"NOW I WAS REALLY MAD AS I PUSHED THROUGH THE DOOR..."
SO! YOU ARE A CROOK! JIM DENVER WAS RIGHT!
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT, YOU LITTLE FOOL?
I HEARD YOU! THE WHOLE DEAL IS OFF! I'LL AGREE TO NOTHING!
YOU'LL BE SORRY FOR THIS! BESIDES, THERE'S ANOTHER WAY TO GET WHAT I WANT!
"A WEEK LATER, I WAS AWAKENED OUT OF A DEEP SLEEP..."
SMOKE! THE HOUSE MUST BE ON FIRE!
"I COULD HEAR THE FLAMES CRACKLING NOW, AND ABOVE THEM ANOTHER SOUND...
GINNY! GINNY! HELP ME!
"AUNT BETSY'S VOICE! I RAN TO THE HALL..."
WE'VE GOT TO GET OUTSIDE — OR WE'LL BURN ALIVE!
"SHE WAS MORE CONFUSED THAN ANYTHING, AND THROUGH THE SMOKE CLOUDS I LED HER TOWARD THE DOOR..."
H-HOW COULD IT HAVE STARTED?
MEN ON HORSES, GINNY - JUST BEFORE I SMELLED THE SMOKE I HEARD THEM!
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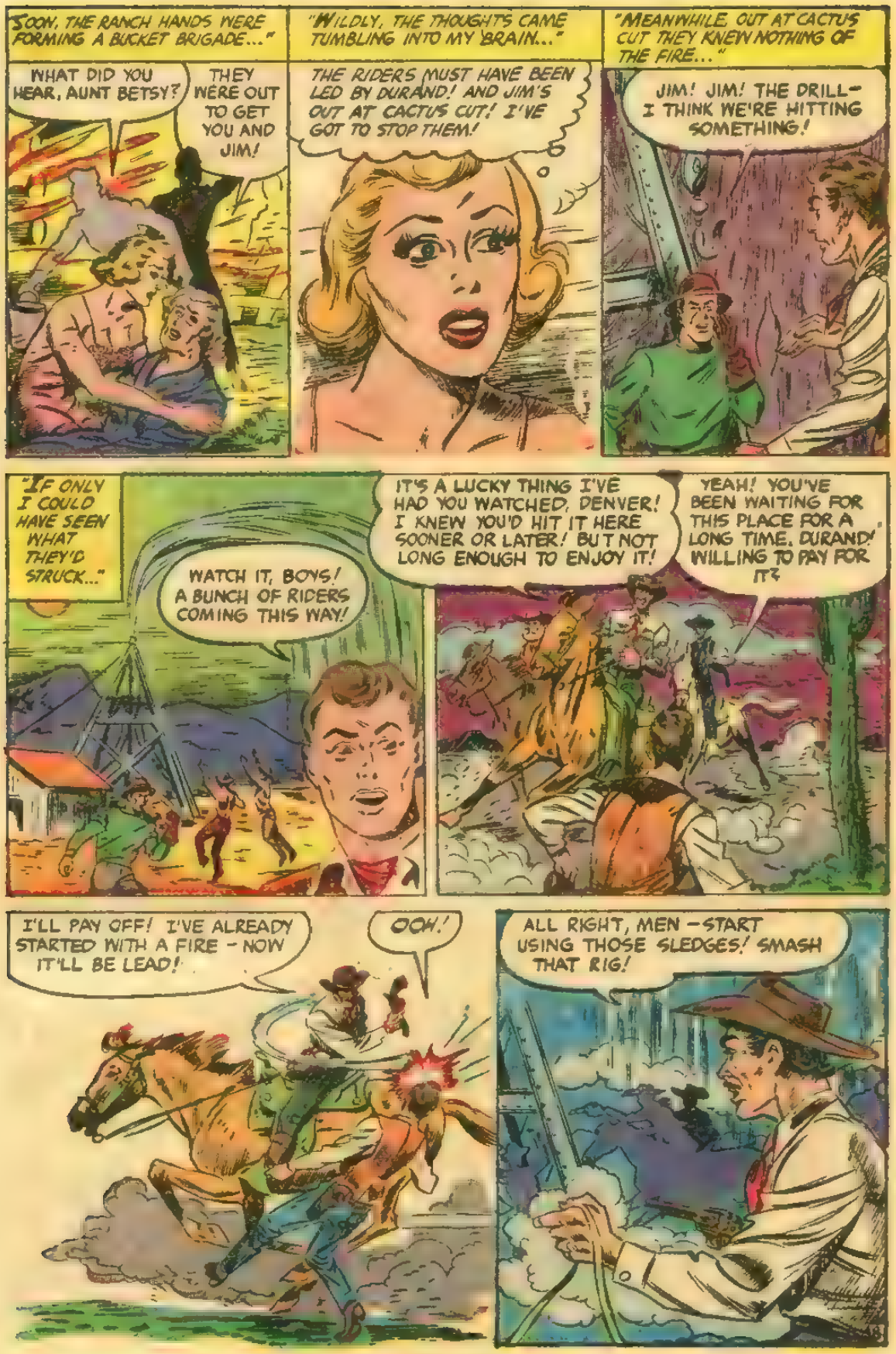
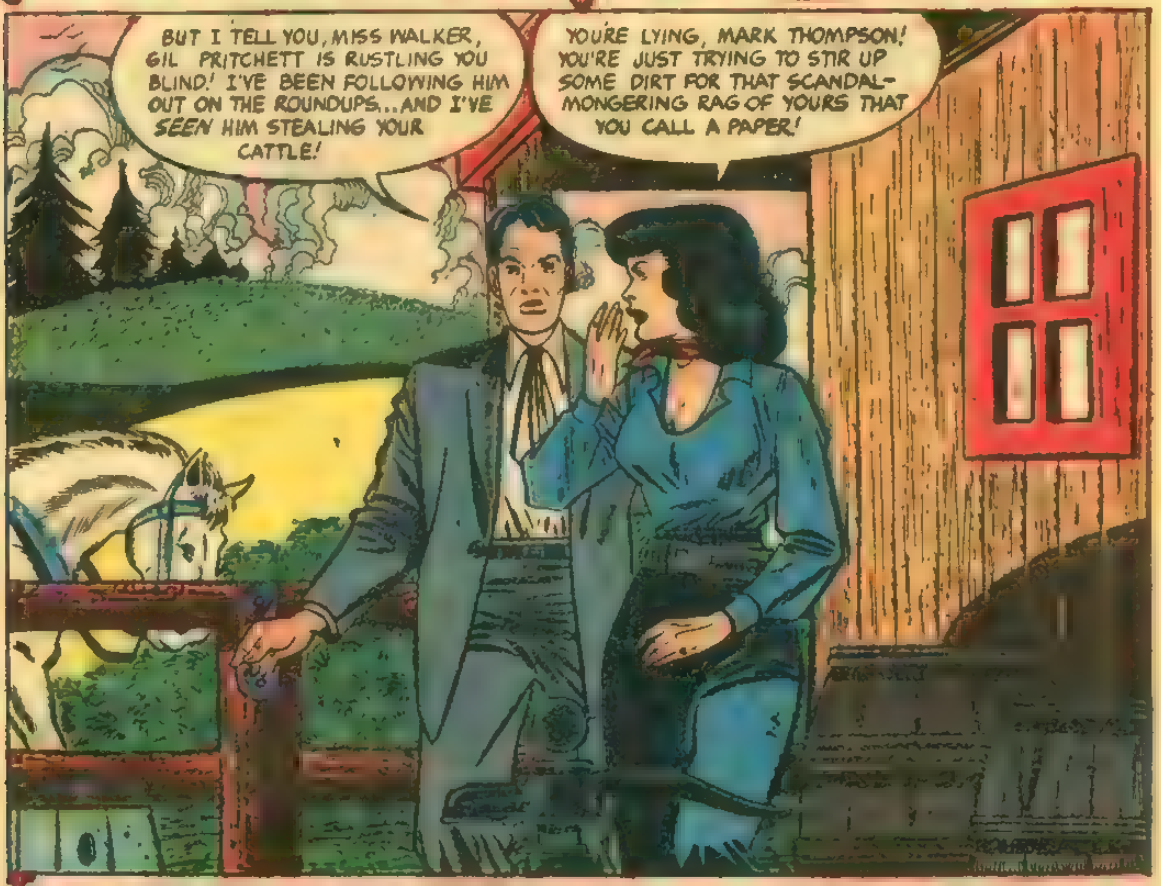
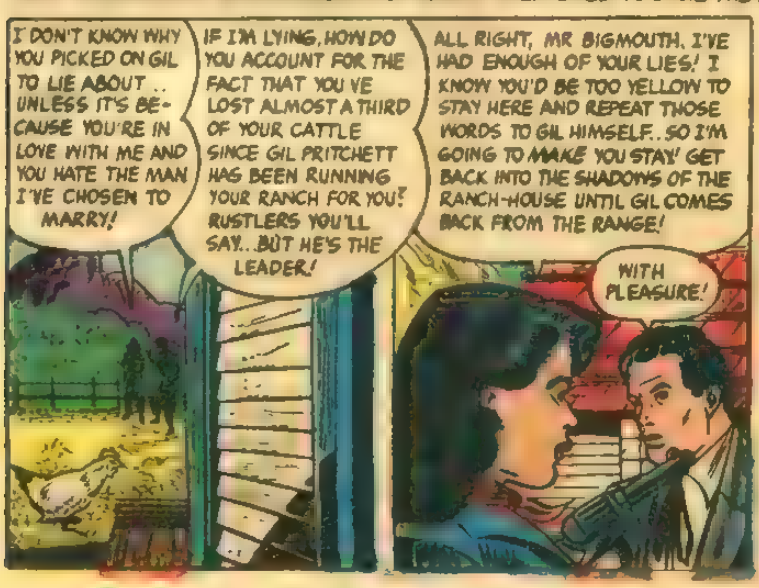

SOON, THE RANCH HANDS WERE FORMING A BUCKET BRIGADE..."
"WILDLY, THE THOUGHTS CAME TUMBLING INTO MY BRAIN..."
"MEANWHILE, OUT AT CACTUS CUT THEY KNEW NOTHING OF THE FIRE..."
WHAT DID YOU HEAR, AUNT BETSY?
THEY WERE OUT TO GET YOU AND JIM!
THE RIDERS MUST HAVE BEEN LED BY DURAND! AND JIM'S OUT AT CACTUS CUT! I'VE GOT TO STOP THEM!
JIM! JIM! THE DRILL— I THINK WE'RE HITTING SOMETHING!
"IF ONLY I COULD HAVE SEEN WHAT THEY'D STRUCK..."
WATCH IT, BOYS! A BUNCH OF RIDERS COMING THIS WAY!
IT'S A LUCKY THING I'VE HAD YOU WATCHED, DENVER! I KNEW YOU'D HIT IT HERE SOONER OR LATER! BUT NOT LONG ENOUGH TO ENJOY IT!
YEAH! YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS PLACE FOR A LONG TIME, DURAND! WILLING TO PAY FOR IT?
I'LL PAY OFF! I'VE ALREADY STARTED WITH A FIRE - NOW IT'LL BE LEAD!
OOH!
ALL RIGHT, MEN — START USING THOSE SLEDGES! SMASH THAT RIG!

HEY, LISTEN! HOOFBEATS COMIN' OVER THE RIDGE
A SECOND LATER, I WAS LEADING THE BROKEN STIRRUP MEN DOWN INTO THE CUT..."
WE'RE OUT-NUMBERED! MAKE A RUN FOR IT!
"THERE WERE SHOTS BLAZING IN THE NIGHT NOW..."
THERE'S DURAND—TRYING TO GET AWAY! HE'S MINE!
"I DROVE STRAIGHT AT HIM..."
HELP! I'M FALLING!
ROUND HIM UP, BOYS—AND HOGTIE HIM!
"IN THE CONFUSION THAT FOLLOWED, I FOUND JIM..."
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME IT WAS WATER YOU WERE LOOKING FOR?
YOU NEVER ASKED ME!
"A FEW DAYS LATER AT MOM AND DAD'S GRAVES..."
THAT WAS WHAT YOUR DAD WAS ALWAYS LOOKING FOR, TOO—GINNY—NOT GOLD!
AND MOTHER...I NEVER REALIZED SHE MUST HAVE FOUND HAPPINESS HERE WITH DAD!
WE'LL FIND IT TOO, GINNY—JUST YOU AND I!
OH, JIM, IF YOU CAN EVER FORGIVE ME FOR BEING SUCH A LITTLE BLIND FOOL!
THE END

FIGHT for your LOVE


BUT I TELL YOU, MISS WALKER, GIL PRITCHETT IS RUSTLING YOU BLIND! I'VE BEEN FOLLOWING HIM OUT ON THE ROUNDUPS...AND I'VE SEEN HIM STEALING YOUR CATTLE!
YOU'RE LYING, MARK THOMPSON! YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO STIR UP SOME DIRT FOR THAT SCANDAL-MONGERING RAG OF YOURS THAT YOU CALL A PAPER!

IT WAS NATURAL FOR PRETTY ELLEN WALKER TO FLY INTO A MAN'S ARMS AND RELY ON HIS STRENGTH WHEN HER FATHER DIED AND LEFT HER THE LAZY K RANCH ..AND THE ARMS OF TOUGH, HARD-RIDING GIL PRITCHETT WERE STRONG ENOUGH FOR ANY GIRL! YES, IT WAS A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN, ELLEN THOUGHT... UNTIL A CRUSADING NEWSPAPERMAN'S WORDS THREATENED TO SPOIL THE ROMANCE OF HER LIFE!


I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU PICKED ON GIL TO LIE ABOUT .. UNLESS IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH ME AND YOU HATE THE MAN I'VE CHOSEN TO MARRY!
IF I'M LYING, HOW DO YOU ACCOUNT FOR THE FACT THAT YOU'VE LOST ALMOST A THIRD OF YOUR CATTLE SINCE GIL PRITCHETT HAS BEEN RUNNING YOUR RANCH FOR YOU! RUSTLERS YOU'LL SAY..BUT HE'S THE LEADER!
ALL RIGHT, MR BIGMOUTH. I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR LIES! I KNOW YOU'D BE TOO YELLOW TO STAY HERE AND REPEAT THOSE WORDS TO GIL HIMSELF..SO I'M GOING TO MAKE YOU STAY! GET BACK INTO THE SHADOWS OF THE RANCH-HOUSE UNTIL GIL COMES BACK FROM THE RANGE!
WITH PLEASURE!

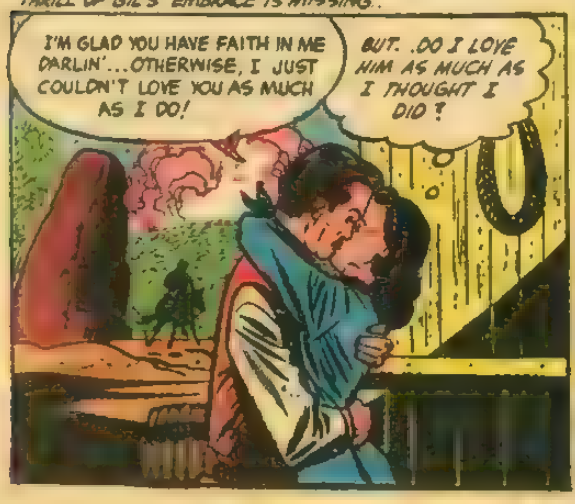
BAD NEWS AGAIN, DARLING. .RUSTLERS STOLE ANOTHER TWENTY OF YOUR HERD LAST NIGHT! WE FOLLOWED 'EM, BUT LOST THEIR TRAIL!
THAT IS BAD NEWS, GIL...BUT I'M SURE YOU DID YOUR BEST! ALL RIGHT, MARK THOMPSON. COME OUT NOW AND SAY YOUR PIECE!

I'LL MAKE IT SHORT, PRITCHETT! I HEARD ABOUT MISS WALKER'S CATTLE LOSSES, AND I THOUGHT THERE MIGHT BE A HOT STORY IN IT FOR MY NEWSPAPER! SO I FOLLOWED YOU OUT ON THE RANGE...AND SAW YOU AND.. YOUR MEN RUSTLING THE CATTLE!
WHY YOU...

NO GIL, DON'T HIT HIM... DON'T DIRTY YOUR HANDS! I'D BELIEVE THE WORD OF A REAL MAN LIKE YOU ANYTIME AGAINST THE WORD OF A DUDE WEAKLING LIKE HIM!
OKAY...BUT I'M NOT THROUGH WITH 'IM YET!

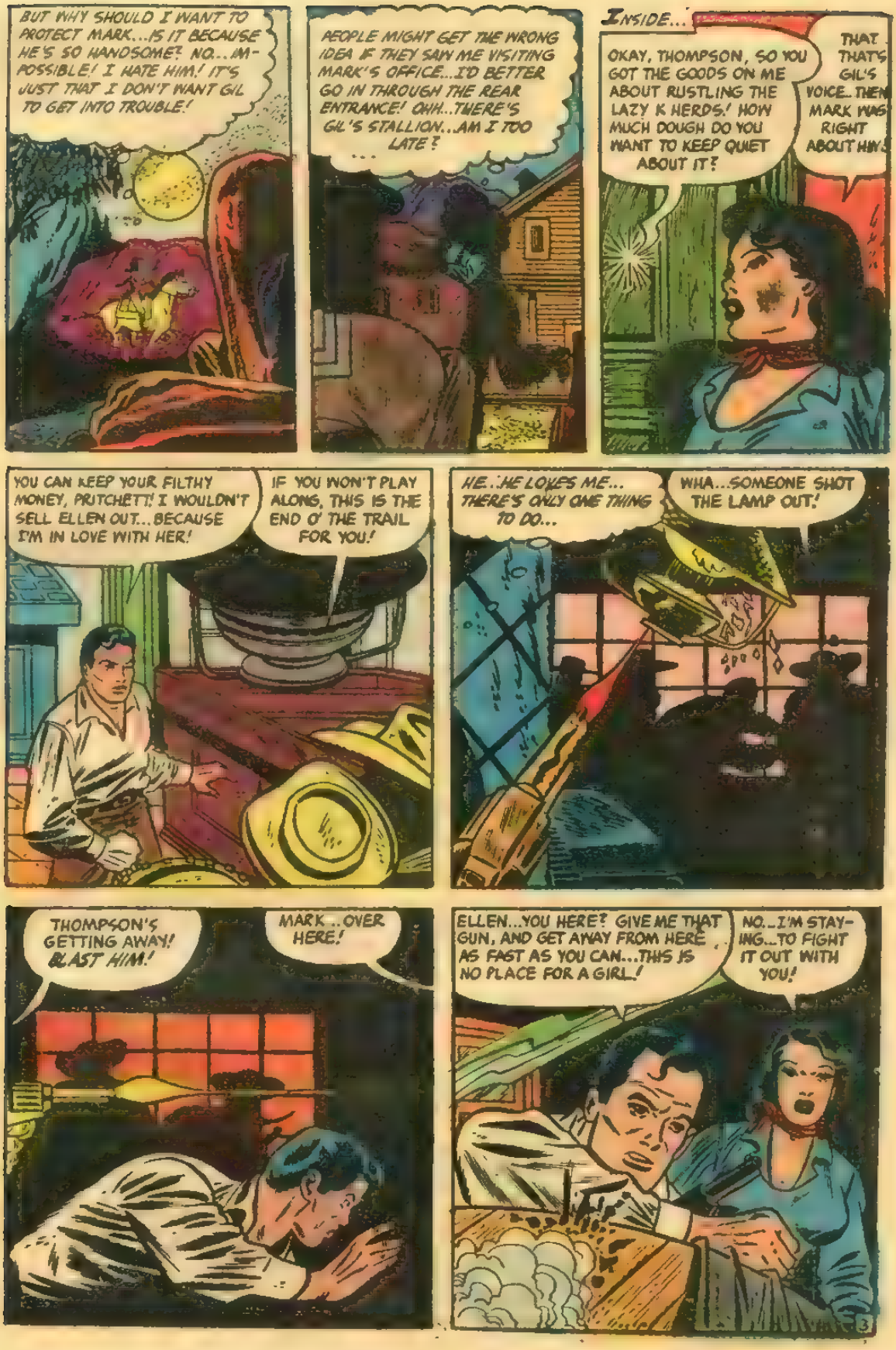
IF YOU'RE TRYING TO BREAK UP MY ROMANCE WITH GIL, YOU CAN FORGET ABOUT IT, MR. THOMPSON...BECAUSE I DESPISE YOU! NOW GET OFF MY RANCH AND STAY OFF!
ALL RIGHT..BUT IF YOU WON'T LISTEN TO MY EVIDENCE, THEN I'LL PRINT IT ALL IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF MY NEWSPAPER!

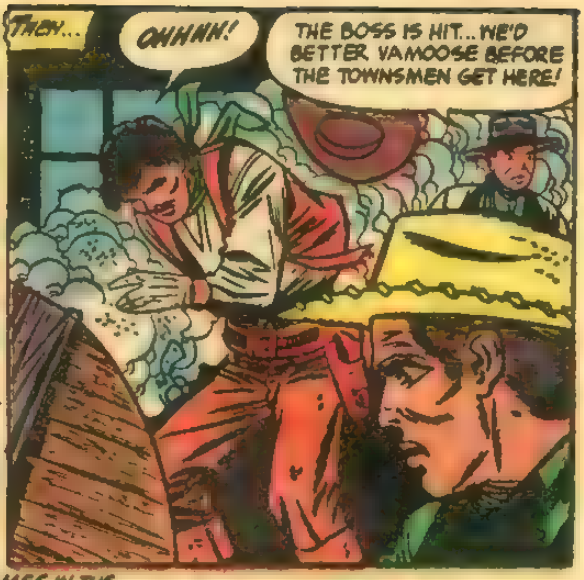
AS MARK THOMPSON RIDES OFF, ELLEN IS SWEPT INTO FAMILIAR, YEARNING ARMS. BUT SOMEHOW, THE OLD THRILL OF GIL'S EMBRACE IS MISSING..

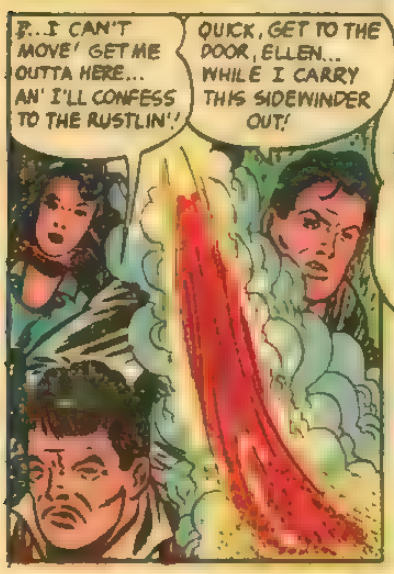

I'M GLAD YOU HAVE FAITH IN ME DARLIN'...OTHERWISE, I JUST COULDN'T LOVE YOU AS MUCH AS I DO!
BUT. .DO I LOVE HIM AS MUCH AS I THOUGHT I DID?

THE FAINT, GNAWING DOUBTS GROW AND GROW IN ELLEN'S MIND..AND THAT NIGHT, SHE FINDS HERSELF OVERCOME WITH AN OVERWHELMING DESIRE TO SEE MARK THOMPSON..

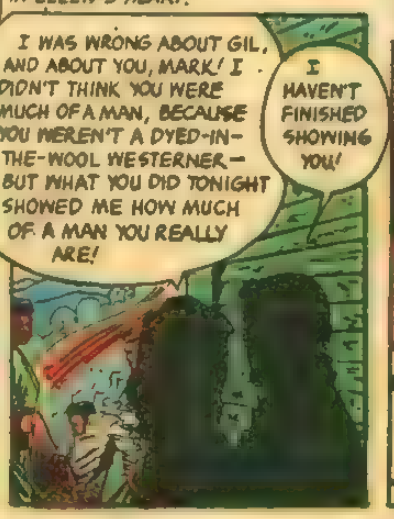
GIL HAS A VIOLENT TEMPER...THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT HE'LL DO IF MARK PRINTS THAT STORY ABOUT HIM! I'D BETTER RIDE INTO TOWN AND WARN MARK!


BUT WHY SHOULD I WANT TO PROTECT MARK...IS IT BECAUSE HE'S SO HANDSOME? NO...IMPOSSIBLE! I HATE HIM! IT'S JUST THAT I DON'T WANT GIL TO GET INTO TROUBLE!
PEOPLE MIGHT GET THE WRONG IDEA IF THEY SAW ME VISITING MARK'S OFFICE...I'D BETTER GO IN THROUGH THE REAR ENTRANCE! OHH...THERE'S GIL'S STALLION...AM I TOO LATE?
INSIDE...
OKAY, THOMPSON, SO YOU GOT THE GOODS ON ME ABOUT RUSTLING THE LAZY K HERDS! HOW MUCH DOUGH DO YOU WANT TO KEEP QUIET ABOUT IT?
THAT...THAT'S GIL'S VOICE...THEN MARK WAS RIGHT ABOUT HIM!
YOU CAN KEEP YOUR FILTHY MONEY, PRITCHETT! I WOULDN'T SELL ELLEN OUT...BECAUSE I'M IN LOVE WITH HER!
IF YOU WON'T PLAY ALONG, THIS IS THE END O' THE TRAIL FOR YOU!
HE...HE LOVES ME... THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO...
WHA...SOMEONE SHOT THE LAMP OUT!
THOMPSON'S GETTING AWAY! BLAST HIM!
MARK...OVER HERE!
ELLEN...YOU HERE? GIVE ME THAT GUN, AND GET AWAY FROM HERE AS FAST AS YOU CAN...THIS IS NO PLACE FOR A GIRL!
NO...I'M STAYING...TO FIGHT IT OUT WITH YOU!
3



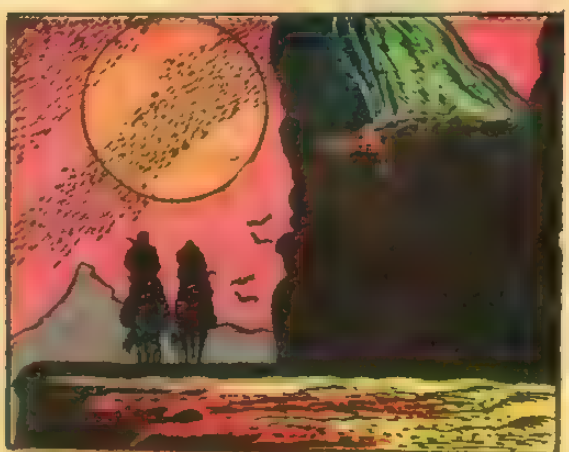


LATER, AS THE FLAMES IN THE BUILDING MATCH THE GROWING FIRE IN ELLEN'S HEART!


I WAS WRONG ABOUT GIL, AND ABOUT YOU, MARK! I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE MUCH OF A MAN, BECAUSE YOU WEREN'T A DYED-IN-THE-WOOL WESTERNER—BUT WHAT YOU DID TONIGHT SHOWED ME HOW MUCH OF A MAN YOU REALLY ARE!
I HAVEN'T FINISHED SHOWING YOU!

THEIR LIPS MEET...AND IN THE DEPTHS OF HER HEART, ELLEN KNEW THAT THIS..THIS WAS TRUE LOVE AT LAST!

I...LOST EVERYTHING IN THAT FIRE, ELLEN...I GUESS THAT MEANS I'M OUT OF A JOB! DO YOU NEED A FOREMAN WHO'S WILLING TO LEARN AS HE GOES...AS WELL AS A HUSBAND?
THE ANSWER IS YES, DARLING... TO BOTH QUESTIONS!



AND AS THE WESTERN SUN RISES GLOWINGLY, TWO PEOPLE IN LOVE RIDE OFF TOWARD A NEW DAY, TOWARD A FUTURE FILLED WITH THE BRIGHT PROMISE OF HAPPINESS TO COME!

THE END

THE TERROR OF THE PLAINS

SOME men said he carried twenty-two buckshot and several bullets buried in various parts of his calloused anatomy. Others said that he had only twenty-eight slugs from two barrels of a shotgun, and still others claimed he had only eleven slugs in his body.

At any rate, Joseph Slade, sometimes called the "Little Terror of the Plains", had some added proof of weight, for he usually wore the ears of "the other fellow" on his watch chain. In fact, he had a hobby of collecting the now useless ears of "the other fellow". Once he sent a small package of assorted ears to an Indian chief, by way of suggesting the fate of certain braves who he said needed reforming, and Slade was the man to do the reforming. If he could send others to heaven, he'd risk the fires of hell himself. People said he was a strange man.

Slade commenced his career as an overland stage man at Julesberg in the northeast corner of Colorado. It was here, in a little log cabin, that he once offered to share his coffee with Mark Twain.

Later Mark Twain wrote about the episode. "I was afraid he had not killed anybody that morning and might be in need of diversion. But still with firm politeness he insisted on filling my cup. I thanked him and drank it, but it gave me no comfort, for I could not feel sure that he would not be sorry presently that he had given it away. I left him with only twenty-six dead people to account for. I had pleasantly escaped being No. 27."

Slade was hired as a division agent for a stage company after thefts of stock and stores had made serious inroads on the company's budget. In the fall of 1860 the general superintendent found Slade, a man who had already killed about a half-dozen men, including Indians. The stage company figured that, if he could maybe kill a half-dozen more, not counting the Indians he could kill on the side, perhaps the thefts by outlaws would cease.

So it was that Joseph Slade went to Julesberg as division agent. Julesberg was a small settlement of the stage station, a warehouse, and a cemetery called Boots Hill. This cemetery boasted exactly one pair of boots to every grave, and it looked like the graveyard would keep its reputation, now that the station agent had arrived. For, merely as a matter of introduction, he proceeded to kill immediately six scoundrels.

From the first it appeared that one Frenchman named Jules Bene was on Slade's list of men marked for death. And, on the other hand, it also appeared that Slade was on Bene's list. For, from the very start, there was enmity between the two men.

To begin with, Jules had been fired when Slade had been hired. Furthermore, to add coal to the fire, Slade had hired an assistant whom Jules had formerly discharged. From this evidence, it appeared that Slade was trying to start a quarrel with the Frenchman by calling him names and charging him with inhuman cruelties against a Pony Express rider.

Then, it seems, Slade got off guard and Jules shot him with a shotgun. Slade fell, but managed to shoot twice at the Frenchman, putting them both in the hospital and nearly in Boots Hill. Slade was determined to kill him.

About a year later, the next encounter took place. Jules was hiding, but Slade had posted a reward for his capture dead or alive, and although he was not an authorized law-agent, his reputation as chief killer was undisputed. For, upon his recovery, he had tamed all the outlaws around the district and developed order from chaos. So he was given the commission of ridding a nearby community of another hotbed of thieves, supposed to be somewhere in the vicinity of Julesberg. This move pleased Slade.

Here, he added many new notches to his gun. Furthermore, he had actually sentenced three victims to hang, and had hanged them,

CONTINUED ON THIRD FOLLOWING PAGE

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By Sidney Elias

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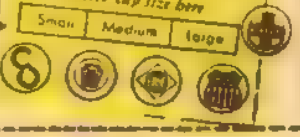


one being a pony express rider. He had done this during his spare time while waiting around for Jules to show up.

Then, one day in September, the Frenchman was brought in, painfully wounded by his captors. Bound hand and foot, he was thrown into a corral and left to the mercy of the court—a court constituting one man—Joseph Slade. The defendant was given a preliminary shooting—a pistol pressed against his cheek and fired. The court then adjourned until the following morning.

The next morning, when "court" again was opened, the defendant was still alive. Slade proceeded to finish the killing, after which he cut off the victim's ears, and went about his business. He had dispensed his justice.

But the boss of Rocky Ridge had his lighter moments too. Once when the gang gathered at the station was lacking for amusement, Slade supplied it.

"Gentlemen," said Slade, drawing his pistol, "It's a good twenty yard shot, but I'll clip the button from that man's coat."

The button was clipped from the bystander's coat, and the rest of the men admired it.

While running away from his first murder, in Illinois, he committed another murder. He had a fight with a wagon driver of a westbound emigrant train, and it appears that the wagon driver drew his gun first. It is said, however, that he did not fire. Slade, in his quiet, gentlemanly manner, persuaded the driver that this little misunderstanding could be settled more peacefully—with fists.

"I'll count one, two; three," said Slade, "then we'll drop our pistols to the ground and begin."

"One. Two. Three!" And the driver fell, drilled through the head by a bullet from Slade's pistol. Slade laughed at his "joke".

Soon he had over twenty murders to his credit, or discredit. Besides that, he had twenty more bullets with names of as many men on them—and maybe a few extra bullets with names of women and children on them. For instance he didn't like a certain unfavorable comment one man made in regard to the torturing of Jules.

Slade went looking for the man and found him in a store tending a bar. Slade asked him for some whiskey. The man turned his back to get the whiskey and was "deader than any man that ever lived." The man's widow started to flee with a baby in her arms, and Slade fired, killing both of them. Before the day was over, he had killed three or four Indians who were hanging around the settlement.

He was an ornery killer who had early decided that scoundrels—most of whom had only a paltry three or four murders to their names—must meet the judgment of his ever ready six-gun arbiter. It's hard to tell just where or how Slade got started on his brilliant career, but he was an erratic business man. Some of the time he posed as a solid citizen with the vengeance of an outraged, peace living man goading his trigger finger. At those times he haunted the trails of big and small bad men. At other times, his restless spirit was appeased only by the successful obliteration of someone "whose looks warn't pleasing". He was the head teacher of the school that taught the only good Indian is a dead Indian. However, he wasn't really too particular, and would as cheerfully gun a white man if no Indian presented himself.

Slade made quite a record for himself. To kill a human meant nothing to him. This murderer went unchecked until the year 1865. At this time Slade left the stage company and joined up with some road agents. The vigilantes finally got him. Thus ended the long and brilliant career of a killer. Sooner or later Slade knew he would be killed. A career of murder has never ended very pleasantly nor very peacefully.

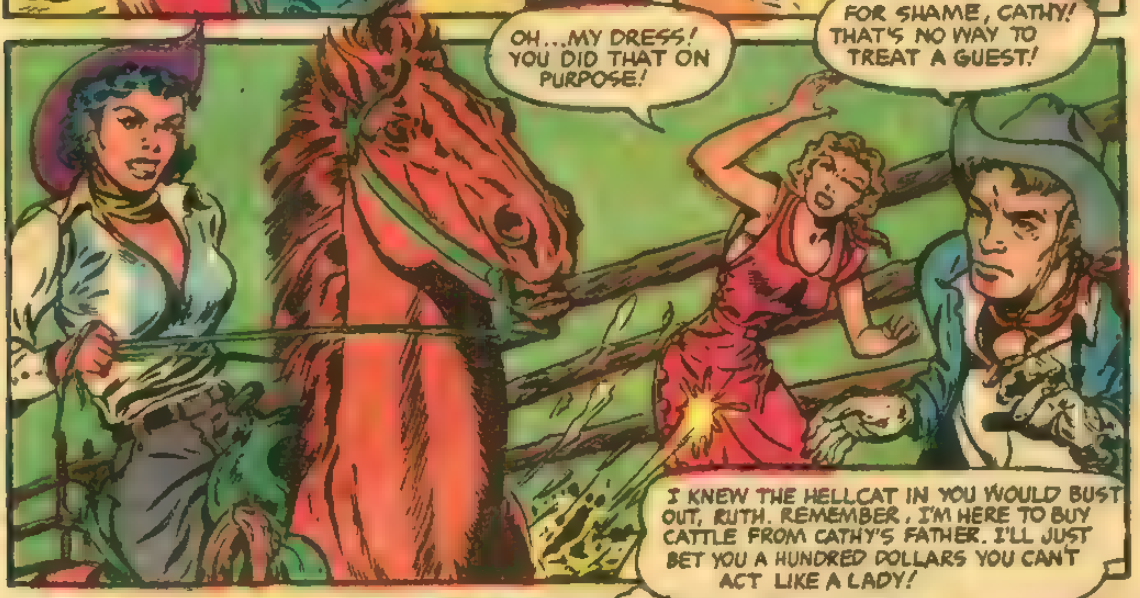
In spite of Slade's reputation as a killer, he also had a reputation among the men of the stage services as "the best superintendent on the route." This commendation was vigorously endorsed by no less than Will Cody after having driven a stage under him.

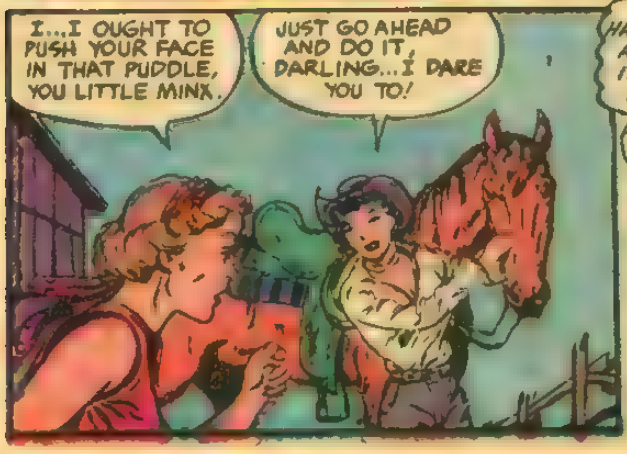
THE END

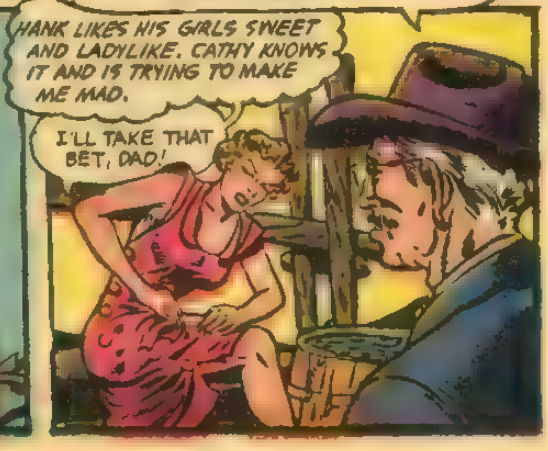
HANK BROOKS THOUGHT RUTH MORGAN WAS AS GENTLE AS A NEW BORN DOGGIE. JUST THE KIND OF A GIRL TO RIDE BESIDE HIM ON...

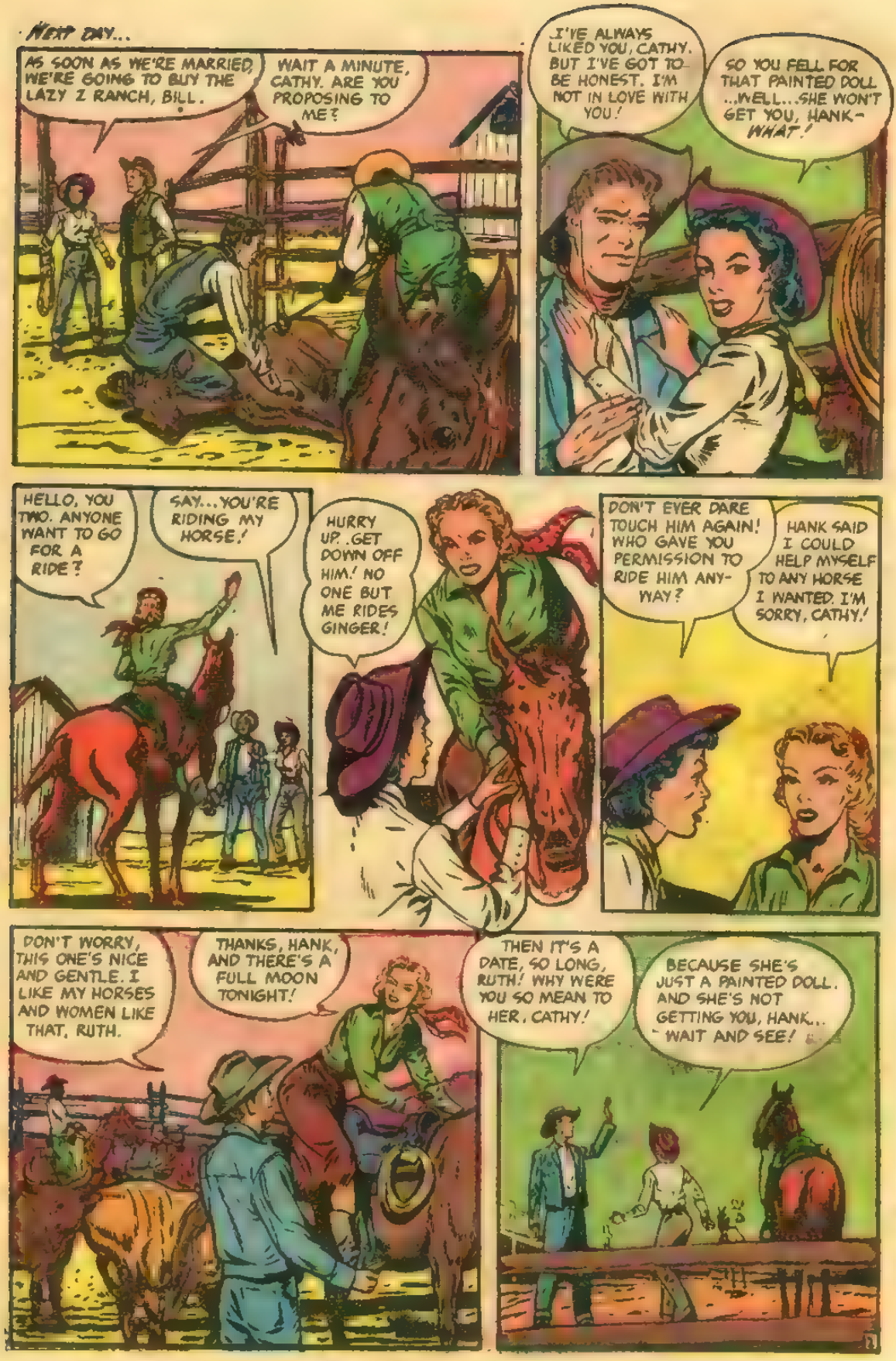
Honeymoon Range

WE'RE NOT USED TO SEEING SUCH SWEET GIRLS AS YOU ARE, MISS RUTH. OUT HERE THEY'RE ALL NOISY TOM BOYS LIKE CATHY. LOOK AT HER RIDING TOWARD US NOW...

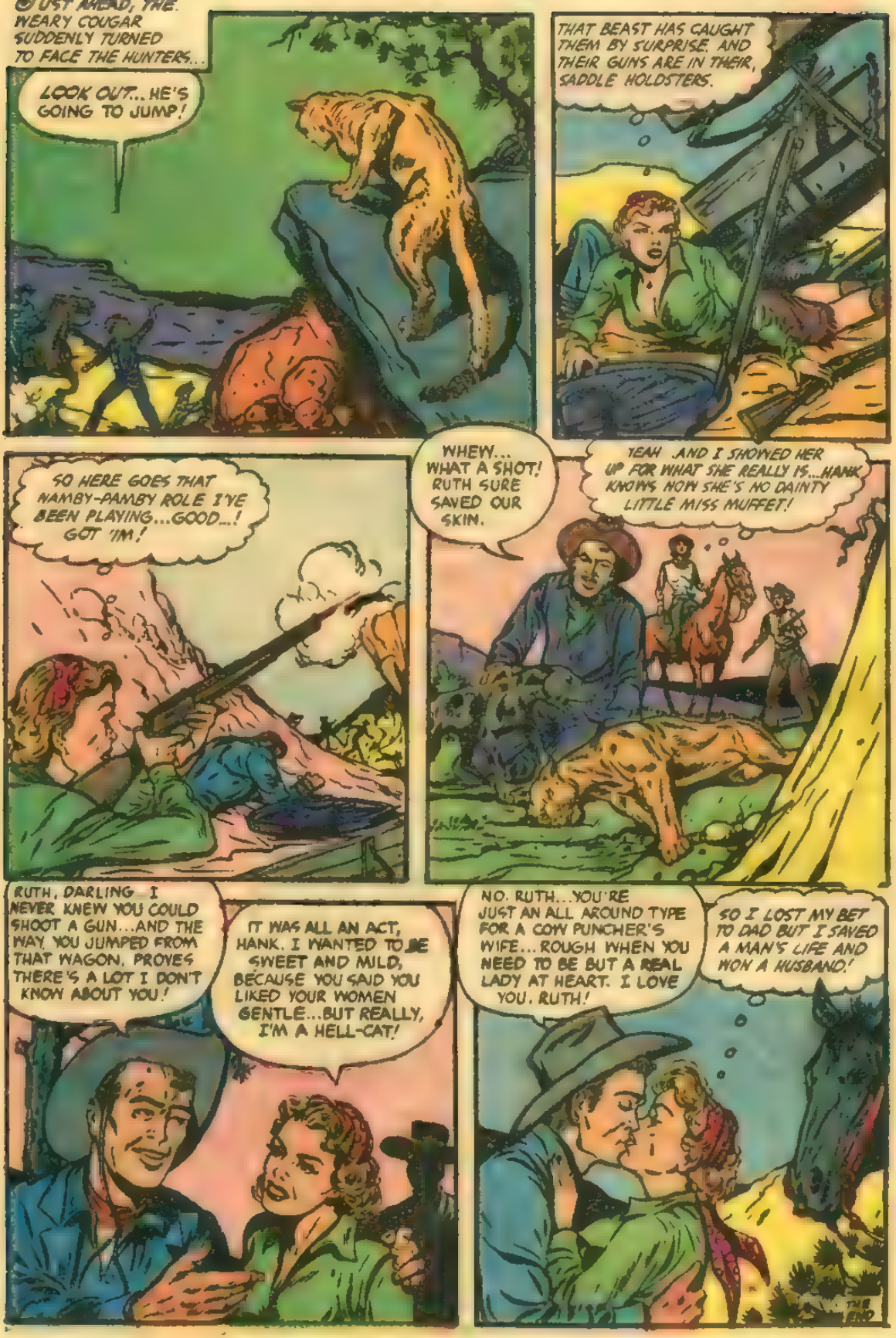

OH...MY DRESS! YOU DID THAT ON PURPOSE!
FOR SHAME, CATHY! THAT'S NO WAY TO TREAT A GUEST!
I KNEW THE HELLCAT IN YOU WOULD BUST OUT, RUTH. REMEMBER, I'M HERE TO BUY CATTLE FROM CATHY'S FATHER. I'LL JUST BET YOU A HUNDRED DOLLARS YOU CAN'T ACT LIKE A LADY!





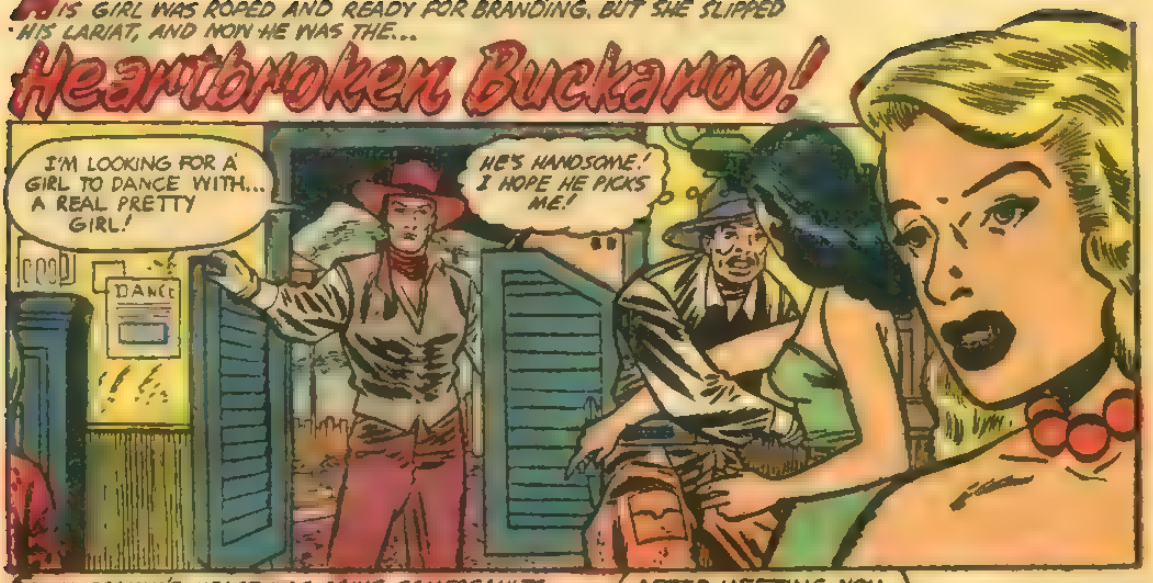

NEXT DAY...
AS SOON AS WE'RE MARRIED, WE'RE GOING TO BUY THE LAZY Z RANCH, BILL.
WAIT A MINUTE, CATHY. ARE YOU PROPOSING TO ME?
I'VE ALWAYS LIKED YOU, CATHY. BUT I'VE GOT TO BE HONEST. I'M NOT IN LOVE WITH YOU!
SO YOU FELL FOR THAT PAINTED DOLL ...WELL...SHE WON'T GET YOU, HANK— WHAT!
HELLO, YOU TWO. ANYONE WANT TO GO FOR A RIDE?
SAY...YOU'RE RIDING MY HORSE!
HURRY UP. GET DOWN OFF HIM! NO ONE BUT ME RIDES GINGER!
DON'T EVER DARE TOUCH HIM AGAIN! WHO GAVE YOU PERMISSION TO RIDE HIM ANY-WAY?
HANK SAID I COULD HELP MYSELF TO ANY HORSE I WANTED. I'M SORRY, CATHY!
DON'T WORRY, THIS ONE'S NICE AND GENTLE. I LIKE MY HORSES AND WOMEN LIKE THAT, RUTH.
THANKS, HANK, AND THERE'S A FULL MOON TONIGHT!
THEN IT'S A DATE, SO LONG, RUTH! WHY WERE YOU SO MEAN TO HER, CATHY!
BECAUSE SHE'S JUST A PAINTED DOLL. AND SHE'S NOT GETTING YOU, HANK... WAIT AND SEE!

RUTH CONTINUED TO PLAY THE LADY. AND SEVERAL DAYS LATER, THE RIDERS BROUGHT NEWS... A COUGAR HAD KILLED SEVERAL COWS ON THE NORTH RANGE. SO A HUNT WAS ORGANIZED AND SOON...
I COULD HAVE RIDDEN A HORSE, HANK.
BUT THIS IS BETTER, RUTH. YOU WON'T GET YOUR CLOTHES DIRTY...
AND ANYWAY I LIKE TO HAVE YOU BESIDE ME. THERE'S THE RANGE AHEAD.
I DO FEEL SAFER WITH YOU, CLOSEBY, HANK. I'M AFRAID OF COUGARS!
AS...
SHE'S HOLDING ON TO HIS ARM...SNUGGLING UP CLOSE... I'LL FIX HER!
SHE DOESN'T FOOL ME BY ACTING SO LADY-LIKE. THIS'LL RUFFLE HER GOWN AND HER TEMPER!
WHOA, THERE! WHOA!
HANG ON, RUTH...SOMETHING'S FRIGHTENED THESE CRITTERS. THEY'RE BOLTING!
LOOK OUT, HANK. WE'RE GOING TO HIT THAT ROCK!
I CAN'T TURN 'EM, RUTH... JUMP CLEAR!
WITH A CRASH, THE BUCKBOARD SPLINTERED AND CRUMBLED...AND ON A NEARBY HILL, A LONE FIGURE SMILED...
"THAT'LL TEACH THEM A LESSON. NOW WE'LL SEE HOW HANK LIKES HIS IDOL ALL MUSSED UP AND ANGRY!


JUST AHEAD, THE WEARY COUGAR SUDDENLY TURNED TO FACE THE HUNTERS..
LOOK OUT... HE'S GOING TO JUMP!
THAT BEAST HAS CAUGHT THEM BY SURPRISE AND THEIR GUNS ARE IN THEIR SADDLE HOLSTERS.
SO HERE GOES THAT NAMBY-PAMBY ROLE I'VE BEEN PLAYING...GOOD...! GOT 'IM!
WHEW... WHAT A SHOT! RUTH SURE SAVED OUR SKIN.
YEAH .AND I SHOWED HER UP FOR WHAT SHE REALLY IS...HANK KNOWS NOW SHE'S NO DAINTY LITTLE MISS MUFFET!
RUTH, DARLING I NEVER KNEW YOU COULD SHOOT A GUN...AND THE WAY YOU JUMPED FROM THAT WAGON, PROVES THERE'S A LOT I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU!
IT WAS ALL AN ACT, HANK. I WANTED TO BE SWEET AND MILD, BECAUSE YOU SAID YOU LIKED YOUR WOMEN GENTLE...BUT REALLY, I'M A HELL-CAT!
NO. RUTH...YOU'RE JUST AN ALL AROUND TYPE FOR A COW PUNCHER'S WIFE...ROUGH WHEN YOU NEED TO BE BUT A REAL LADY AT HEART. I LOVE YOU, RUTH!
SO I LOST MY BET TO DAD BUT I SAVED A MAN'S LIFE AND WON A HUSBAND!
THE END

HIS GIRL WAS ROPED AND READY FOR BRANDING. BUT SHE SLIPPED HIS LARIAT, AND NOW HE WAS THE...

Heartbroken Buckaroo!

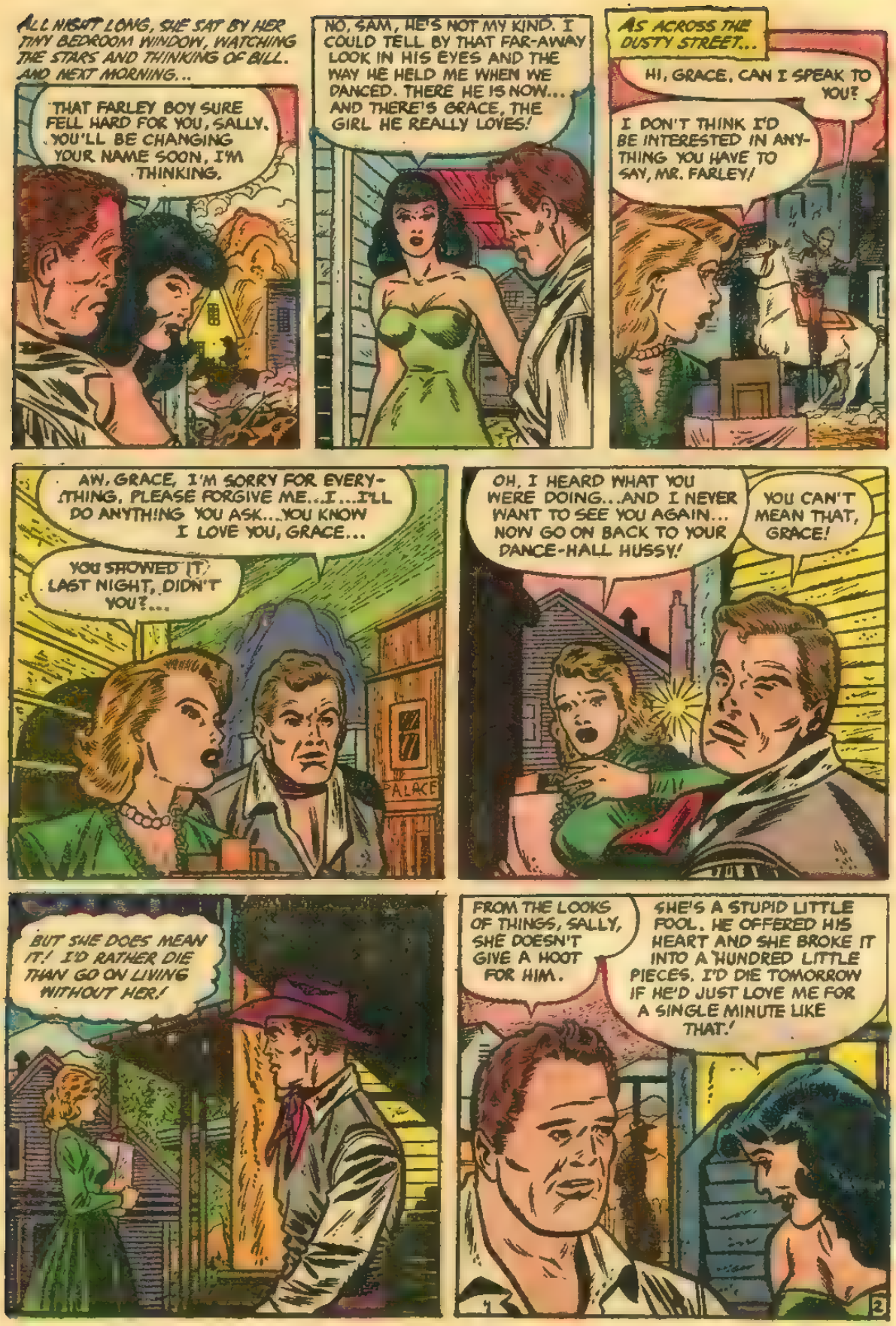


SALLY GRAHAM'S HEART WAS DOING SOMERSAULTS AS SHE WATCHED HIM SHOULDER THROUGH THE CROWD AND COME TOWARD HER... THEN HE SPOKE SOFTLY...

AFTER MEETING YOU, I'M GLAD GRACE CHAPMAN AND I QUARRELED. YOU'RE WONDERFUL, SALLY.
AND I LIKE YOU TOO, BILL. I..I HOPE YOU'LL COME HERE OFTEN.

DO YOU LIKE TO RIDE THE RANGE IN THE MOONLIGHT, SALLY...AND LISTEN TO THE COYOTES' FAR-OFF BARK...AND WATCH THE STARS WINKING HIGH UP IN THE PURPLE SKY?
I NEVER DID BUT I'D LOVE TO, BILL. THAT IS, IF YOU WERE THERE BESIDE ME. DID YOU USED TO RIDE LIKE THAT WITH GRACE?

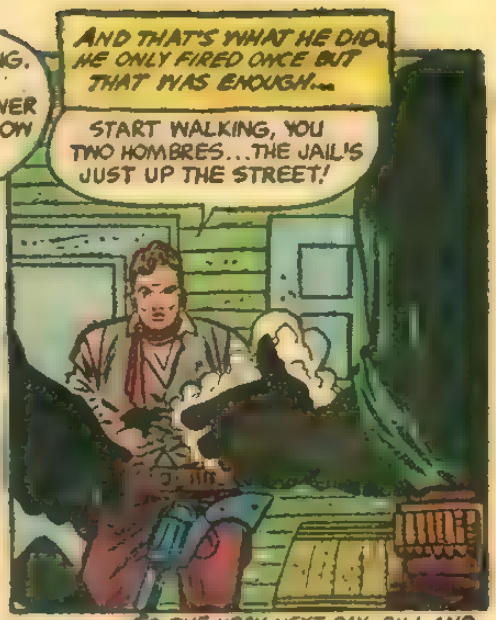
SURE. BUT THAT'S ALL PAST AND FORGOTTEN. FROM NOW ON, I'M NEVER GOING TO RIDE WITH ANYONE BUT YOU...
SO LONG, BILL...YOU'LL ALWAYS FIND ME HERE WAITING FOR YOU... YES, ALWAYS!
HE'S WONDERFUL. AFTER MEETING HIM, I COULD NEVER LOVE ANYONE ELSE!


ALL NIGHT LONG, SHE SAT BY HER TINY BEDROOM WINDOW, WATCHING THE STARS AND THINKING OF BILL. AND NEXT MORNING...
"THAT FARLEY BOY SURE FELL HARD FOR YOU, SALLY. YOU'LL BE CHANGING YOUR NAME SOON, I'M THINKING.
NO, SAM, HE'S NOT MY KIND. I COULD TELL BY THAT FAR-AWAY LOOK IN HIS EYES AND THE WAY HE HELD ME WHEN WE DANCED. THERE HE IS NOW... AND THERE'S GRACE, THE GIRL HE REALLY LOVES!
AS ACROSS THE DUSTY STREET...
HI, GRACE. CAN I SPEAK TO YOU?
I DON'T THINK I'D BE INTERESTED IN ANYTHING YOU HAVE TO SAY, MR. FARLEY!
AW, GRACE, I'M SORRY FOR EVERYTHING, PLEASE FORGIVE ME...I...I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU ASK...YOU KNOW I LOVE YOU, GRACE...
YOU SHOWED IT LAST NIGHT, DIDN'T YOU?...
PALACE
OH, I HEARD WHAT YOU WERE DOING...AND I NEVER WANT TO SEE YOU AGAIN... NOW GO ON BACK TO YOUR DANCE-HALL HUSSY!
YOU CAN'T MEAN THAT, GRACE!
BUT SHE DOES MEAN IT! I'D RATHER DIE THAN GO ON LIVING WITHOUT HER!
FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS, SALLY, SHE DOESN'T GIVE A HOOT FOR HIM.
SHE'S A STUPID LITTLE FOOL. HE OFFERED HIS HEART AND SHE BROKE IT INTO A HUNDRED LITTLE PIECES. I'D DIE TOMORROW IF HE'D JUST LOVE ME FOR A SINGLE MINUTE LIKE THAT.
2

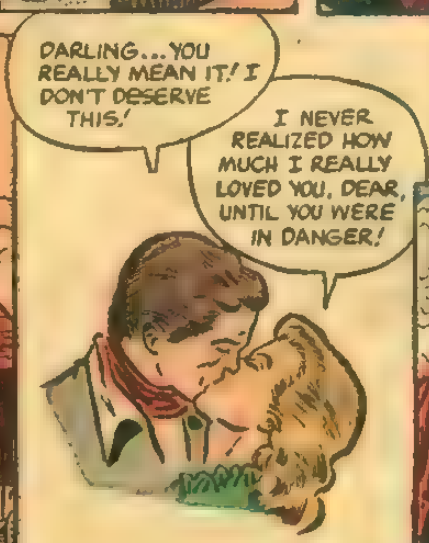
THAT NIGHT, PAINT AND POWDER HID THE TEAR STAINS ON SALLY'S CHEEKS... AND LIKE MORE A FROZEN SMILE WHEN SHE DANCED. SHE TRIED TO FORGET, AND SHE ALMOST DID, WHEN SUDDENLY SHE HEARD HIS NAME...
BILL FARLEY'S UPSTAIRS IN THE HOTEL RIGHT NOW.
BUT NOT FOR LONG. THEY'LL BE DIGGIN' HIS GRAVE IN BOOT HILL TOMORROW.
THEN GET UP THERE RIGHT NOW AND TAKE CARE OF HIM. I'LL PAY YOU OFF WHEN YOU GET BACK!
THEY'RE GOING TO KILL BILL... BUT I WON'T LET THEM... I WON'T!
IF I TOLD HIM, HE'D JUST STAND UP IN FRONT OF THEM AND SHOOT IT OUT. BUT IF GRACE SHOWED HIM SHE CARED, HE'D REALLY WANT TO LIVE!
AND SOON, AT THE CHURCH BAZAAR...
YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE DANCE HALL GIRLS, AREN'T YOU? WE DON'T WANT YOUR KIND AROUND HERE!
IT'S VERY IMPORTANT... PLEASE TELL MISS GRAHAM I'VE GOT TO SEE HER.
I TRIED TO SHOO HER AWAY, GRACE, BUT SHE INSISTS ON SEEING YOU.
I'LL GO... I'M CURIOUS TO KNOW WHAT SHE WANTS ME FOR.
AND SOON...
CAN'T I MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND, THEY'RE GOING TO KILL HIM! YOU'VE GOT TO GO AND WARN HIM, GRACE!
I WON'T! HE'S NOTHING TO ME. WHY DON'T YOU GO?
BECAUSE HE LOVES YOU, HE'LL HAVE SOMETHING TO LIVE FOR AFTER YOU TELL HIM. AND YOU'RE GOING TO TELL HIM... NOW MARCH!

THEY FOUND HIM SITTING ALONE IN A SHABBY ROOM, HIS CHIN CUPPED IN HIS ARMS.. STARING DULLY AT THE WALL. BUT AFTER GRACE KISSED HIM AND TOLD HIM SHE REALLY CARED, HE GRABBED HIS GUN AND LEAPED TO THE WINDOW..

YOU WON'T TAKE ANY CHANCES, BILL? PLEASE PROMISE!
DON'T WORRY, DARLING. I'LL JUMP OFF THE PORCH ROOF AND COVER 'EM BEFORE THEY KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING.



AND AFTER THE SHERIFF HAD LOCKED THEM UP, AND THEY STARTED TO SAY GOODBYE...

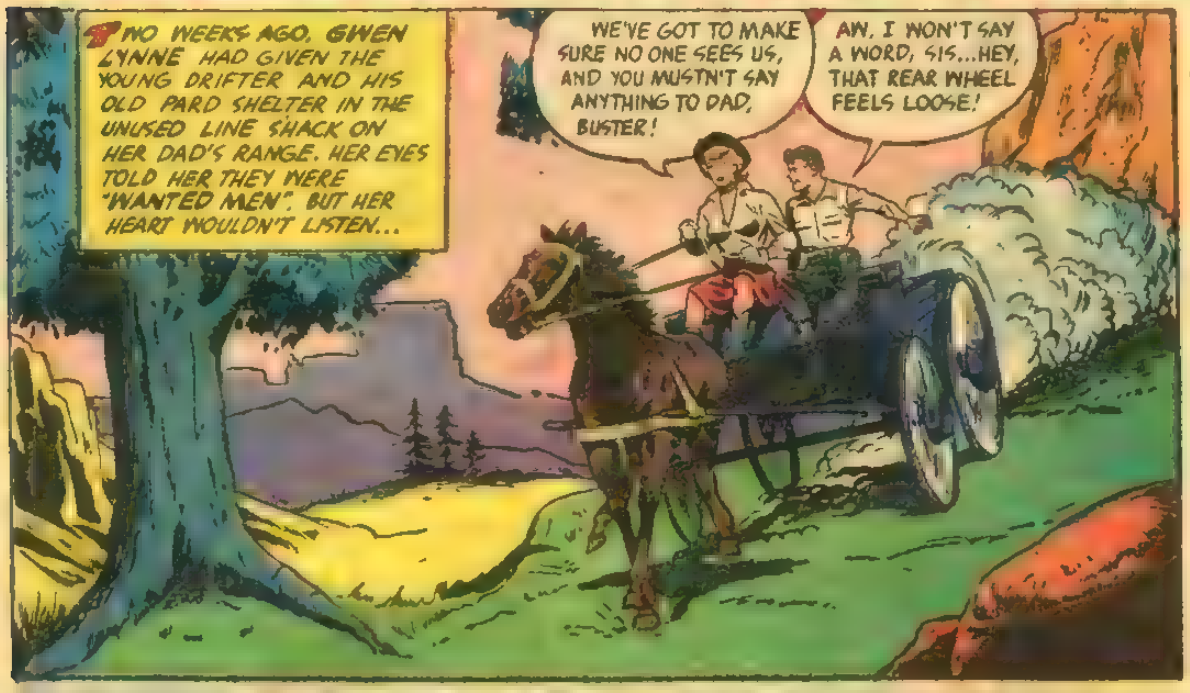


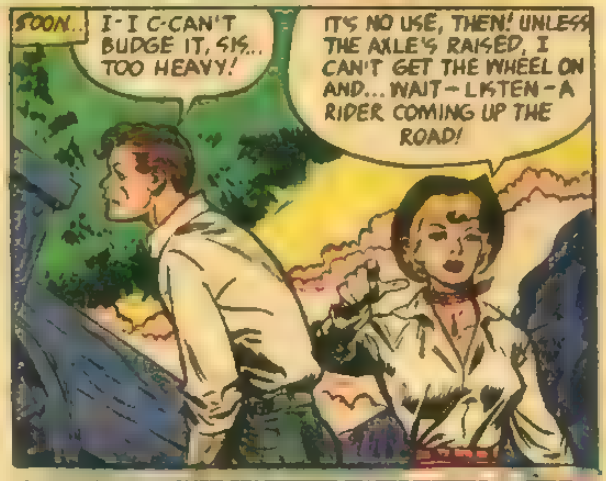
SO THE VERY NEXT DAY, BILL AND GRACE WERE MARRIED. AND FROM THE LOOK IN THEIR EYES AND THE SMILES ON THEIR FACES EVERYONE KNEW THEY'D ALWAYS BE RIDING THE RANGE SIDE BY SIDE...

SALLY WAS BITTING HER LIP, AND FORCING A SMILE AS SHE WATCHED THE PROCESSION...

NO, BOYS. HE HAD TO DO IT HIMSELF. AND GRACE HAD TO SHOW HIM SHE CARED. HE'D NEVER HAVE BEEN HAPPY IF IT HAD HAPPENED ANY OTHER WAY. AND HIS HAPPINESS IS REALLY ALL THAT COUNTS!
THE END

I'll Love You ALWAYS


TWO WEEKS AGO, GWEN LYNNE HAD GIVEN THE YOUNG DRIFTER AND HIS OLD PARD SHELTER IN THE UNUSED LINE SHACK ON HER DAD'S RANGE. HER EYES TOLD HER THEY WERE "WANTED MEN", BUT HER HEART WOULDN'T LISTEN...
WE'VE GOT TO MAKE SURE NO ONE SEES US, AND YOU MUSTN'T SAY ANYTHING TO DAD, BUSTER!
AW, I WON'T SAY A WORD, SIS...HEY, THAT REAR WHEEL FEELS LOOSE!


SOON...
I-I C-CAN'T BUDGE IT, SIS... TOO HEAVY!
IT'S NO USE, THEN! UNLESS THE AXLE'S RAISED, I CAN'T GET THE WHEEL ON AND... WAIT - LISTEN - A RIDER COMING UP THE ROAD!

NAME'S THAD HAMMOND, AND WHILE I DON'T MAKE A HABIT OF TALKIN' TO STRANGE WOMEN, I ALWAYS TRY TO BE OF SERVICE WHEN THEY NEED HELP! MAY I MA'AM?

A BRIEF SECONDS LATER...
HOW IS IT, MISS? DO I HAVE IT HIGH ENOUGH?
PERFECT, MR. HAMMOND! YES, THERE--IT'S ON NOW!
I'M AWFULLY GRATEFUL TO YOU, IF I CAN REPAY YOU IN ANY WAY...
MEBBE YOU CAN, MA'M! I'M LOOKIN' FOR A COUPLE OF DRIFTERS, ONE IS YOUNG AND THE OTHER KINDA OLD.. LET ME KNOW IF YOU SEE 'EM!
THEN SHE WAS OFF AND HER HEART WAS HAMMERING WILDLY AS SHE RODE...
BUSTER, HE'S LOOKING FOR LES AND POP! I WONDER IF HE KNOWS!
I DUNNO, GWEN LOOKS IMPORTANT, DON'T HE?
THIS IS WHAT I'VE BEEN AFRAID OF... HAMMOND'S A STAR-PACKER FOR SURE! IF ONLY I KNEW WHAT LES AND POP ARE RUNNING FROM! I'VE GOT TO WARN THEM!
SOMETIME LATER, SHE ARRIVED AT THE OLD LINE SHACK..
HI, GWEN! YOU'RE LATE! Y'SAID YOU'D BE HERE AT TWELVE, AND IT'S AFTER!
LES, YOU'D BETTER HEAR WHAT I HAVE TO SAY!
...THEN HE HINTED HE WAS LOOKIN' FOR YOU AND POP. LES--LES...IS HE A LAWMAN?
TALL AND DARK,...NAME OF HAMMOND, EH? HMM, I DON'T KNOW, GWEN! YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO TRUST ME, THAT'S ALL!
I DO, LES--FROM THE FIRST MINUTE I SAW YOU, I-I, JUST KINDA TRUSTED YOU, I GUESS!
YOU WON'T BE SORRY! BUT IF THIS FELLOW HAMMOND SHOULD COME AROUND AGAIN, BE SURE TO LET US KNOW!
2

A FEW DAYS PASSED, GWEN STAYED AWAY FROM THE LINE SHACK FOR FEAR THAT ONE OF HER DAD'S RANCH HANDS MIGHT SUSPECT SOMETHING AND FOLLOW HER. BUT IT WAS THE MORNING OF THE FOURTH DAY, THE STRANGER, HAMMOND, RODE INTO THE FRONT YARD...

BUT FROM THE HOUSE...

HOWDY, MISTER LYNNE! I'M LOOKIN' FOR TWO DRIFTERS! ANY PLACE AROUND HERE THEY COULD HIDE? MARSHAL HAMMOND'S THE NAME!

NARY A PLACE, UNLESS THEY MIGHT USE THAT OLD LINE SHACK UP IN THE NORTH ACRES MARSHAL!

IT'S HIM! NOW I KNOW LES IS AN OUTLAW, BUT SOMEHOW I DON'T SEEM TO CARE! I'VE GOT TO WARN HIM AT ONCE!

THANKS! THEY'RE WANTED FOR BANK HOLDUP AND MURDER, SIR. I LL HAVE A LOOK UP THERE.

GOOD LUCK, MARSHAL! IF YOU NEED HELP, CALL ON ME!

BANK HOLD UP! MURDER! OH, NO...IT CAN'T BE AS BAD AS THAT! I'VE GOT TO HURRY AND CUT HAMMOND OFF!

HALF AN HOUR LATER, TURNING ONTO THE NORTH ACRES TRAIL...

SOMETHING MOVED IN THOSE PINE TREES JUST AHEAD! MAY BE HAMMOND, I'VE GOT TO THINK FAST--

THEN SUDDENLY HE WAS OUT AT HER...

HOLD ON, MISS! YOU WANT TO REPAY THAT DEBT, DON'T YOU?

SHE TRIED TO SWERVE AWAY FROM HIM, BUT..

NO, YOU DON'T! I KNEW IF I STAYED HERE LONG ENOUGH YOU'D COME BY— TO WARN THOSE COOTS! YOU'RE STILL GOING TO, BUT WITH ME!

SOON...
NO ONE AROUND! LEAVE YOUR HORSE HERE OUTSIDE, AND REMEMBER, ONE PEEP AND I'LL SHOOT YOU FOR OBSTRUCTING JUSTICE!
CAREFULLY, HE HID HIS OWN HORSE BEHIND SOME BRUSH, THEN...
RIGHT HOSPITABLE GENTS, I'D SAY - LEAVIN' EVERYTHING SET FOR A NICE LITTLE TRAP!
I'VE GOT TO WARN LES SOMEHOW! MAYBE I'LL MAKE A BREAK!
GWEN STARTED TO RUN, BUT SWIFT FINGERS CAUGHT HER...
OH NO YOU DON'T, SISTER. YOU'LL STAY RIGHT HERE WITH ME!
AH, IT'S THEM, ALL RIGHT! AND WALKING RIGHT INTO MY ARMS. I NEVER THOUGHT IT'D BE THIS EASY! NOT A PEEP NOW OR YOU'LL GO FIRST - AND I'LL GET THEM ANYWAY!
AS
LOOK, GWEN'S HORSE! SHE'S HERE, MAYBE SHE'S GOT SOME MESSAGE ABOUT HAMMOND, POP!
AND MAYBE IT'S A TRAP TOO... SON! WHY AIN'T SHE OUTSIDE? LET'S GO KEERFULLY!
AT THAT MOMENT...
THE YOUNG ONE FIRST! TH' MOST DANGEROUS! THE OLD ONE'LL BE EASY TO TAKE, AND HE'LL TALK!
A WILD SHOT CRACKLED THE STILLNESS AS GWEN TWISTED FREE...
BLAM

DUCK. SOMEONE'S GOT A BUSHWACK GUN ON US!
THERE'S GWEN- LOOK!
PING
BETTER GIVE UP PEACEFULLY, COYOTES-- OR THE GAL'S GONNA GET IT!
BUT SUDDENLY...
RUN, LES! TAKE OUR HORSES AND ESCAPE WHILE YOU CAN!
WHY, YOU SHE-DEVIL...
THERE WAS A LOUD CRACK AS A FIST CAME SMASHING IN...
ARGH!
THEN SWIFTLY...
SAY, YOURE NOT SAM JACKSON..
NO! WE ARRESTED HIM AND OLD BARKLEY RIGHT AFTER THE BANK HOLDUP, HAMMOND. WE CIRCULATED IT ABOUT THAT THEY HAD ESCAPED WITH THE LOOT!..
...KNOWING YOU'D HUNT FOR THEM - AND WHEN YOU FOUND THEM, WE'D HAVE YOU, THE LEADER! ALLOW ME, LES RYAN AND POP WILSON-- DEPUTY MARSHALS!
I KNEW YOU COULDN'T HAVE BEEN AN OUTLAW, LES - MY HEART TOLD ME!
IT'S THAT LITTLE VOICE THAT WHISPERS WITHIN YOU, GWEN DEAR--AND IT'S NEVER WRONG!
THE END

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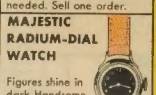

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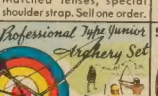

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